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CIA Head Resigns

The big surprise in President Johnson's news conference last Saturday afternoon was his announcement that he had accepted the resignation of retired Admiral William Raborn as head of the super-secret Central Intelligence Agency. He said the resignation was "accepted with regret", and that Richard Helms, deputy head of the CIA, would move up to the directorship.

Whether the controversy between Admiral Raborn and Sen. William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had anything to do with the resignation is not publicly known. But Fulbright is striving to have some members of his committee named to the joint committee of Congress

which oversees CIA operations. This has provoked a hot argument. It was learned last Friday that last February Raborn had refused to discuss "CIA sources and methods" at a briefing for the Foreign Relations Committee. That refusal triggered the current battle over adding members to the CIA oversight committee.

Asked at the press conference to elaborate on the Raborn resignation, the President said that the former Admiral came to the post last year for an indefinite period "and now desires to return to California." And presumably that is where he is going. Official information from Washington these days is not always complete.